



AN INSIGHT INTO THE ROLE OF EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND MODERNISATION

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ABSTRACT

Change is the law of life, and changes in society are always taking place. Changes may be slow, so slow that people may not even perceive them; there are times when they are so rapid and drastic. In all spheres of life things are changing in the economic sphere, in the political fields, in the sphere of education and so on. Social changes to a great extent are brought about through the process of education.

Modernization is the most overwhelming feature of the contemporary human society. It is a process of change in social, economic, educational and political systems drawn especially from the societies of Western Europe. It may be described as 'social change involving the elements of science and technology and their far-reaching effects on social values, social behaviour and practices'.

It involves change based on rationality. It has varied facets and dimensions which cannot be encompassed in a few words. But here our purpose and understanding the process of modernization can be attributed to increasing levels of schooling and literacy, the development of mass media, increasing social and geographical mobility, the development of a very high level of technology, systems of transportation and communication, more and more urbanization, change from agricultural occupations, growth in per capita income, increasing division of labour and specialized roles, declining extended family and so on.

Introduction:-

Education has been accepted as one major agency of socialization, and teachers and educational institutions as socializing agents. In describing education as an instrument of social change, three things are important: the agents of change, the content of change, and the social background of those who are sought to be changed, i.e. students. Educational institutions under the control of different cultural groups reflect the values of those groups which support and control education. In this situation, teachers impart specific values, aspirations and to the children, social reformers, who were educated emphasized values like removal of caste restrictions, equality of women, doing away with social evil social customs and practices, voice in the governance of the country, establishing democratic institutions and so on. They, thus, wanted to teach liberal philosophy through education for changing society. In other words they regarded education as a flame or light of knowledge which dispelled the darkness of ignorance. The use of education for spreading the values of modernization came to be emphasized from the 1960s and 1970s onwards. Highly productive economies, distributive justice, people's participation in decision-making bodies, adoption of scientific technology in industry, agriculture and other occupations and professions were accepted as goals for modernizing the Indian society. And these goals were to be achieved through liberal education. Thus, modernization was not accepted as a philosophy or a movement based on rational values system but as a process that was to be confined only to economic field but was to be achieved in social, political, cultural and religious fields too. Education was sought to be utilized as channel for the spread of modernity.

Social change means a change in social structure, in the size of society, in the composition or balance of its parts or in the types of its organization (Ginsberg, 1958). Social change is an incontestable feature of cultural reality. It is another thing that its pace varies from age to age, culture to culture and from one area of culture to that of another. For a variety of reasons the pace of social change has been rather slow in earlier cultures, chief reasons being the hold of authoritarianism, religion, illiteracy etc. With the decline of authoritarianism and religion, with the rise of science, technology and industry, with the attendant fast means of communication and travel, the process of social change has been accelerated. It can be said that social mobility comes through education. Social change is influenced by so many factors such as historical, cultural, geographical, biological, demographical, political, economical and ideological factor. Education is also an important tool for social change.

Education has become one of the influential instruments of social change in India. It has led to the mobilization of people aspirations for development and change. Thus in modern complex national societies, education can neither be regarded as a controlling force conserving cultural heritage, nor could it be viewed as an agent of social change. It can only be regarded as a cooperative force in bringing about social changes decided by the forces possessing more pervasive power in society. Thus the Indian education system needs a complete overhaul through proper legislation and its effective implementation. Legislations should be made taking into account the regional diversities of each state. The masses should be made aware of the new developments.

The modernization of education in India becomes a special problem in several ways. India has adopted the path of economic development within the framework of a free society and therefore it cannot adopt authoritarian means to modernize education. The centre has to get the willing consent of the states and each state has to get the willing consent of its elected representatives in their legislative assemblies before introducing any major change in the allocation of resources to education or in the educational system itself.

Education plays an essential role in society, creating knowledge, transferring it to students and fostering innovation. Modernization is a process of socio-cultural transformation. It is a thorough going process of change involving values, norms, institutions and structures. According to the sociological perspective, education does not arise in response of the individual needs of the individual, but it arises out of the needs of the society of which the individual is a member. In a static society, the main function of the educational system is to transmit the cultural heritage to the new generations. But in a changing society, these keep on changing from generation to generation and the educational system in such a society must not only transmit the cultural heritage, but also aid in preparing the young for adjustment to any changes in them that may have occurred or are likely to occur in future.

The diffusion of scientific and technical knowledge by modern educational institutions can help in the creation of skilled manpower to play the occupational roles demanded by the industrial economy. Other values like individualism and universalistic ethics etc can also be inculcated through education. Thus education can be an important means of modernization. The importance of education can be realized from the fact that all modernizing societies tend to emphasize on the universalization of education and the modernized societies have already attained it. In the ancient days, education was concentrated to one particular group. But with the modernization of education, now everyone has access to education, irrespective of their caste, religion, culture and economic background.

The impact of modernization can be seen in the schools also. The modern day schools are fully equipped with technically sound devices that help children develop their expertise in a more lucid manner. Effective facilities provide barrier-free access for individuals with disabilities, are free from health and environmental hazards, offer adequate space for students and teachers, and are equipped with appropriate technology for classroom and instructional use. Learn more about the issues surrounding school facilities and modernization by tapping into these resources. The useful life for a school building is affected by how teachers and students work together for learning. As teaching methods change, buildings may also need to change to accommodate them. Current teaching models require more flexibility in class spaces than the one classroom model. Students working together in small groups, for example, can use the shared spaces between classrooms in some of the newest elementary schools in the district.

Patterns of modernization:-

The varying patterns in the relationship between the polity and the society (polity dominance, polity dependence, and polity autonomy) are only one aspect of the

extraordinary diversity which has characterized the process of political modernization throughout history. There presumably is no single universal process, no uniform sequential pattern or common structural arrangement. The modernizing experience of each country is *sui generis*. According to one view, the only generalization one can make is that late modernizers "... will not follow the sequence of their predecessors, but will insist on changing it around or on skipping entirely some stages as well as some 'preconditions'" (Hirschman 1962). Nevertheless, certain patterns have been suggested. One typology (Black 1966), based on three criteria (the ascendancy and consolidation of modernizing leadership, economic and social transformation, and the integration of society), identifies seven patterns of political modernization: (1) Britain and France, the early modernizers and models for later modernizers; (2) the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, the offshoots of Britain and France in the New World; (3) the other societies of continental Europe, in which the consolidation of modernizing leadership occurred after the French Revolution; (4) the independent countries of Latin America; (5) societies that modernized without direct outside intervention but under the influence of early modernizers (Russia, Japan, China, Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Thailand); and (6) and (7) former and residual colonial territories differentiated according to the existence of precolonial institutions adaptable to modern conditions. Using different criteria, another schema (Eisenstadt 1964 b) distinguishes six clusters (constitutional democracies; totalitarian states; indigenous revolutionary regimes such as Turkey and Mexico; dictatorships in eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America; authoritarian regimes in Spain and Portugal; and the postcolonial new states). A third schema (Huntington 1966), primarily concerned with the earlier phases of political modernization in Europe and America, distinguishes three patterns (continental European, British, and American) according to three criteria (rationalized authority, differentiated political structure, and mass political participation). Actual or ideal-typical patterns of political modernization in late-modernizing new states as a special category have also been suggested (Shils 1959-1960; Apter 1965).

Variables affecting modernization:-

Among the many variables which can affect—and which historically have decisively affected—the course of political modernization, four seem to be particularly crucial: (1) the traditional political structure and culture, (2) the historical timing of the modernization thrust, (3) the character and orientation of political leadership, and (4) the sequence in which major system-development problems or “crises” generic to the political modernization process are encountered.

1. Tradition:-

Traditional institutions and values have an extraordinary resilience and persistence. “[The] form a modern society takes is the result of the interaction of its historically formed traditions with the universalizing effects of modernization” (Black 1962). For example, if prior to the modernization leap a national state, a centralized government, and a dominant value system supportive of innovation and change already exist, there can be a “reinforcing dualism” (Conference on Political Modernization ... 1964) between the traditional system and the modernizing process.

2. Timing:-

The timing of the modernizing “take-off” is also crucial in many ways: it determines the significance of an array of other variables, such as the international environment, the range of modernizing models available for emulation, the political manipulability or obstructiveness of tradition, the degree of social and political mobilization of the population and the resultant demand load upon the polity, and the opportunities for modernizing short-cuts available to late starters favoured by the so-called Law of Evolutionary Potential (Sahlins & Service 1960).

3. Leadership:-

The nature of a modernizing political leadership largely determines the extent to which tradition is harnessed to modernization if it is supportive or neutralized if it is obstructive. It also determines the degree to which the disadvantages of timing are minimized and the opportunities are exploited. Individual political leaders and political elites have been the prime movers in political modernization. The rate and direction of that process, as well as the political structures and culture which emerge, reflect in large measure the values and goal orientations of the leadership; its adaptive and creative capacities; and its reaction to the modernization crises it confront.

4. Crises:-

The experience of the most highly developed contemporary polities has led to the identification of several critical “system-development problems” or “crises” which every modernizing polity encounters at least once and must cope with or surmount if it is to continue to modernize (Conference on Political Modernization ... 1964; Black 1966; Almond & Powell 1966; Pye 1966). Although formulations vary, the following six problems illuminate this way of conceptualizing the political modernization process: (1) national identity, the transfer of ultimate loyalty and commitment from primordial groups to the larger national political system; (2) political legitimacy, the legitimization of modernizing elites and the authority structure of the new state; (3) penetration, the centralization of power, the establishment of a “determinate human source of final authority” transcending pre-existing subnational authority systems (Huntington 1966), the bridging of discontinuities in political communication, and the effectuation of policies

throughout the society by the central institutions of government; (4) participation, the development of symbolic or participatory institutions and a political infrastructure to organize and channel the characteristically modern mass demand for a share in the decision-making process; (5) integration, the organization of a coherent political process and pattern of interacting relationships for the making of public policy and the pursuit and achievement of societal goals; and (6) distribution, the effective use of government power to bring about economic growth, mobilize resources, and distribute goods, services, and values in response to mass demands and expectations.

The modernization of a political system is measured by the extent to which it has developed the capabilities (symbolic, regulative, responsive, extractive, and distributive) to cope with these generic system-development problems (Almond 1965; Pennock 1966). It is argued not only that these capabilities are logically related but also that they suggest an order of development, that is, the development of one type of capability requires the development of another (e.g., increasing the extractive capability implies an increase in the regulative capability). Indeed, this approach could be the first step in the direction of a theory of political modernization, if the structural and cultural characteristics of political systems can be related to the ways in which these systems have confronted and coped with the crises common to all of them (Almond & Powell 1966).

Systematic comparative historical studies of political modernization in Western polities are increasingly feasible as a consequence of the development of data archives and the use of electronic computers in processing historical information (Rokkan 1966). One promising initial focus would be upon the growth in political participation: in most countries of the West the requisite political statistics are available as far back as the French Revolution. This rediscovery of the legitimacy and theoretical potentiality of the historical dimension in political research and in diachronic analysis has been one of the unintended consequences of the postwar concern with the modernization of the developing countries. Continued systematic study of the evolution of the latter, together with the retrospective analysis of the political modernization of older polities, should significantly enhance our capacity not only to generalize about the past but also to suggest probabilities regarding the future.

We give below some of the aspects of social change, which are oriented to modernity:-

1. Sociological writings on secularism:-

One of the strongest pillars of modernity in India is secularism. It assumes much importance in the context of Indian tradition. Hinduism is not only a religion of the vast majority of people; it is also a way of life of the masses of people. Even the caste system and in this respect the social stratification, i.e., hierarchy is drawn from Hinduism. But Hindus are not the only people in India.

There are Sikhs, Muslims, Buddhists, Jains and Christians who also belong to this country. The Hindu-Muslim tension has become a historical matter of conflict for both the communities. The Babri Masjid demolition and the Gujarat communal genocide have made a great divide between the two communities.

It is in this context that the prime problem of modernity is to focus on the issues related to secularism. In any programme of the building of our nation-state, secularism occupies the priority. It becomes obligatory for sociologists – if they are worth the salt of nation – to focus on the issues pertaining to secularism. Sociology of science and technology:

Science, as an aspect of modernization, has been very scantily studied by Indian sociologists. Here, in our country, science is broadly looked as an instrument of change in relation to its socio-economic development. Whatever small studies our sociologists have been able to make lead us to infer that in the field of agriculture and industry there has been a general acceptance of science and technology. Despite the acceptance, the balance seems in favour of the choice for indigenous technology instead of foreign technology. True, those advocating this approach do plead for certain flexibility in this regard.

2. Industrialism and factory system:-

Some studies have been conducted on India's industrialism and factory system. In a number of microscopic studies the growth of indigenous entrepreneurship has been examined covering different communications of India.

In this respect, we have a large number of sociologists who carried studies of industries as a part of modern industrialism. Among the industrial sociologists may be included Amlendu Guha, Raymond Owens, Ashis Nandy, N.R. Sheth and Satish Saberwal. Richard D. Lambert has made a successful formulation of modernization in his studies of factories in Poona:

3. Modernization and social change in societal institutions:-

Modernization processes have not only brought changes within the framework of industrialism, but also affected change in the roles of family, position of caste and tribe in the realm of power structure, emergence of new factions, dominant caste in villages, acceptance of bureaucracy at different levels of administration, new social movements, labour movements, urban growth (including emergence of slums) and industrial demographic changes. These social changes are found in various sectors of nation's life. There are, in other words, impacts of moderniza-

tion on social life.

4. Equity, mobility and the education of the disadvantaged:-

Education is the most powerful pillar of modernization. It is through it that hierarchical social structure is changed and there emerges social mobility and equality. The ICSSR sponsored a national study on educational status of the country in 1974.

It covered fourteen states, involved several social scientists and aimed at collecting some basic data concerning the situation and the problems of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Besides this, there are several individual contributions.

All these studies bring out the fact that education has been a major instrument of change on the desired aims of modernity, namely, democracy, rationality and secularism.

5. Modernization and emphasis on professions:-

Professions emerged as a specialized field of enquiry in India at the turn of the sixties. Historically, it was during the British rule that professionalism appeared in the form of 'babus' and other technicians associated with industrialism. A systemic study of profession was made by B.B. Misra for the first time in 1961.

It remained practically the only work until 1967 when S.M. Dube made the first empirical study on social mobility among the professionals. The early studies of professions in India began as a part of the study of middle class and mobility. It was T.N. Madan who initiated an era of serious research in 1969.

It was during seventies that a flood of studies on professions emerged. T.K. Oommen and R. Jeffery worked on medical profession. Legal profession was explored by Mare Galanter, C. Morrison and J.S. Gandhi. Academic professions were enquired by Yogendra Singh and Suma Chitnis, G.S. Aurora and Radha Rao took up scientific profession and S.W. Dubey studied professions in general.

S.L. Sharma, in the Trend Report of ICSSR, makes an elaborate analysis of professionalism which followed the introduction of modernization in post-independent India. His observations are:

The research concerns of sociology began to change in the later half of the sixties from the study of traditional social institutions to that of modern institutions as well as of the modernization of the traditional institutions, thanks to Nehru's design for India's modernization. With UN's declaration of the sixties as the decade of development, the process of modernization got accelerated leading to modernization of occupational cultures as well as a remarkable trend of professionalization.

What S.L. Sharma stresses is that modernization has turned traditional occupations to professions. These professions cut across the boundaries of caste, sex and ethnicity. Admittedly, the emergence of professionalism in India is largely due to the processes of modernization. But, the new professions have acquired their social and cultural character out of the local context. Yogendra Singh's analysis of traditional-occupational-professional encounter runs as below:

In terms of technical expertise, skill and organization, the process of professionalization does contribute to modernization. Some professions do so more than others. In the former category are the professions of management, science and technology. The medical, legal and other professions come next. In terms of ideology and social structure, the nature of modernization that professions have in India is highly class-oriented, is segmentary in character and contributes to a structure of social, economic and political domination which reinforces social and economic inequalities. It also creates a sub-culture of modernity with a high degree of dependency upon the medical profession in more advanced countries. Its impact on the modernization process in India is highly segmentary in nature, and its fruits can reach people today only through a filter-down process, which only accentuates social and cultural contradictions already existing in social inequalities.

Whatever studies on professionalism have been made in India, make it clear that the modernization effect has altered the needs of the people at large. It is also found that the professions cater to the expectations of a narrow class interest and the vast masses continue to survive on their indigenous techniques. The professionalism also tends to create contradictions at various levels of society.

It should also be mentioned that professionalism has certain prerequisites in terms of money investment, training and sustained period of learning. These prerequisites can only be fulfilled by the higher class people. The benefits of professional modernization are, therefore, cornered by the well-to-do people only. It creates disenchantment to modernity.

Conclusion:-

Education has become one of the influential instruments of social change in India. It has led to the mobilization of people's aspirations for development and. Thus in modern complex national societies, education can neither be regarded as a controlling force conserving cultural heritage, nor could it be viewed as an

agent of social change. It can only be regarded as a cooperative force in bringing about social changes decided by the forces possessing more pervasive power in society. Thus the Indian education system needs a complete overhaul through proper legislation and its effective implementation. Legislations should be made taking into account the regional diversities of each state. The masses should be made aware of the new developments.

To sum up, education is a necessity for all irrespective of caste, creed colour or gender. Every country should be concerned about education. Computer power, Technology, and Telecommunication technology and technology in relation to activities (in industry, business, services and home) have converged and, therefore, education system has to adapt to them to develop the education methods, practices and procedures. Case study method, storytelling method, experience sharing, group discussions, exercises and role play are now the tools used to teach and learn without strain and stress. Education develops the individual: it makes him civilized and sophisticated and a competent professional capable of coping with difficult situations and ultimately an expert with the qualities of a good human being and a responsible citizen. Education effects changes in thinking, ideology, culture and interaction and this is what makes society dynamic, vibrant and prosperous. There is an undeniable link with personal development, social and economic development and ultimately, national and international development. Education removes all kinds of barriers and helps in establishing peace, harmony and happiness. Teachers are the kingpins for growth, development and empowerment good governance is the driver.

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